



January 11, 2019

Mr. Rick Caruso
Chairman, USC Board of Trustees
Caruso Affiliated
101 The Grove Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90036
E-Mail: rcaruso@carusoaffiliated.com

Re: Transparency and Accountability at USC

Dear Rick:

I'm writing this letter as a member of the Board of Trustees out of concern about the way you have been conducting business since you became Chairman. Your job, as the new Chairman, is to make things better at USC, but you've roiled the school with the way you've handled important matters, and the one in particular addressed in this letter.

Publicly, you preach the importance of "transparency and accountability" as the way to address the multitude of issues facing USC, yet your actions and practices are just the opposite. I think your "words" are part of a self-serving agenda that does not have USC's best interests at heart. The situation with Jim Ellis, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business, is a case in point.

You presided over an opaque process whereby Jim was removed without any legitimate basis and without informing him—or the Board of Trustees—of the underlying facts. Then you orchestrated and pushed through a Board "vote" approving Jim's removal, without telling the Trustees the true facts and, in fact, concealing them from the Board.

Corporate governance and fiduciary duties require that you should have disseminated the "facts" used by the Interim President in arriving at the decision to remove Jim; and this should have been done in advance of the Board meeting, so that Board members could be properly informed concerning the matter upon which you planned to have them vote. This didn't happen, and the ensuing decision sent shock waves from one end of the USC campus to the other.

I believe you did all this to curry favor with and make yourself look good in the press—as the "champion" of diversity. But serving as Chairman is not about making you look good. It's about being open and honest—"transparent"—and doing what's best for USC. It's your duty, as the Board's fiduciary, to ensure the Trustees get all the facts.

I want your actions to match your words.

A. Transparency

You didn't tell the Board that the "reasons" for Jim's removal were based on Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) complaints from 2008-2009—ancient history, when Jim was early on in this deanship and under circumstances where he inherited the problems of his predecessors. You didn't tell the Board that none of the complaints were against Jim personally. You didn't tell the Board that to the extent complaints were brought to Jim's attention, he dealt with them appropriately.

You didn't tell the Board that, since 2015, there has been, according to OED, a noticeable decline in complaints regarding the Marshall School. You did not provide the Board with any data comparing the incidence of OED complaints at Marshall to the number of complaints received at the various other schools on campus or business schools nationally, so that the Board would have the ability to view the Marshall School in proper context.

In fact, you did everything you could to make Jim look bad and make yourself look good. This is not how a Chairman of the Board is supposed to act.

You also didn't discuss the Cooley Report in any depth with the Board, and you didn't tell the Board how it came into existence or about its apparently ulterior purpose. And, adding insult to injury, you ousted me from the Board meeting on a phony pretext after limiting me to speaking for literally one minute.

You effectively prevented me—a Trustee who has given his all and millions of dollars to USC—from speaking his mind on this very important issue. Your action was arbitrary, discriminatory and contrary to everything the University stands for—openness, free speech and the interchange of viewpoints; and it's also rude and hurtful.

Nor did you tell the Trustees that the Cooley Report did not recommend the removal of Jim, or that it concluded there was no pervasive culture of gender or racial bias at the Marshall School or by the School's leadership team, including Jim. Don't you think the Trustees would have liked to know these facts?

No materials, not the Cooley Report nor anything else, were distributed to the Trustees before or at the meeting. In effect, you deprived the Trustees of the facts, orchestrated the presentation and effectively told them it was your way or the highway.

You also, in my opinion, were unclear and to a lot of the Trustees downright confusing as to exactly what you were asking them to vote on. You presented the matter as a decision by the Interim President, and you said she and she alone had discretion to make the decision. Then why present it for a vote at all?



You, in effect, told the Board that it was the Interim President's call and that they had no choice in the matter other than to back her up. Very confusing, orchestrated and high-handed. The Trustees never got the chance to review, and vote, on Jim Ellis as Dean on the merits.

You and the Interim President talk about changing "institutional culture" at Marshall. As one Marshall faculty member asked, what does this even mean? You owe it to the Board of Trustees—and the Marshall faculty and student body—to tell them what you're talking about, so they can determine if they even want your version of "institutional culture."

As also observed by the Marshall faculty member, you talk about USC's "core values," one of which, according to your own words, is transparency. You and the Interim President—who likely will soon be gone—have been anything but transparent in the reasons for removing Jim Ellis—no due process, no explanation on the merits (because there are none), nothing.

I want full and complete disclosure of all of the facts relating to the removal of Jim Ellis as Dean of the Marshall School, including the dissemination of any and all documents to the Board such as the Cooley Report. It is the legal right of every Trustee to have these documents, and it is your legal obligation to provide them.

Pursuant to California Corporations Code section 6334, "[e]very director shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of any kind and to inspect the physical properties of the corporation of which such person is a director." Per Corporations Code section 6311, "the right to inspection includes the right to copy and make extracts."

These rights were denied to the Trustees including even the few Trustees who were forced to come to campus to review the Report and could neither make nor remove a copy from a private viewing room. Everybody—all the Trustees—should have all the facts well before they are asked to vote. We deal with sensitive "personnel" matters all the time and never before have we been denied access to pertinent information, such as the personnel files.

USC is a corporation, and the Trustees are members of its governing Board. The law requires full and effective disclosure. I've also learned that you withheld from the Trustees the results of a survey taken of the Marshall School's faculty shortly after Jim's dismissal was announced, survey results that overwhelmingly supported him and evidence a strong, positive, diverse and inclusive culture at Marshall (a copy is attached).

Under Corporations Code section 6336, the Superior Court can enforce the legal rights provided in sections 6334 and 6331. With all the lawyers you've hired and have on staff, including two who were present at the Board meeting, it's shocking that you failed to abide by the most basic—and important—requirement that the Trustees be fully informed of the facts.



Former chairman of the Board of Trustees, Ed Roski, said it well in addressing how you “handled” the recent Board meeting regarding the removal of Jim Ellis. The Roski letter of December 19, 2018 is attached to this letter, and if the Trustees haven’t already read it, they certainly should as a part of their duties as Trustees.

Only when all the facts are on the table, and the underlying documents are provided, will there be the transparency proper governance—and the law—requires and that USC sorely needs. Once that is done, I request a Board meeting with a full, uncensored, unstifled discussion, and then a new, fair vote on Jim Ellis’ status as Dean.

B. Accountability

You must be held accountable for what you’ve done here. To that end, I request that the Board appoint a Special Committee to examine your actions in this matter—including the abusive manner in which you treated me at the last Board meeting—and that the Committee address and make recommendations to the Board about your fitness to continue serving as Chairman.

Last, I understand that the Provost sought to muzzle Jim Ellis from speaking about his removal (see attached December 3, 2018 email from Michael Quick to Jim Ellis). This action is antithetical to everything for which USC stands. The Provost should withdraw this threat and rescind the gag order, so that Jim is free to speak without fear of reprisal.

Along the same lines, the Board should bring Jim in and ask him questions directly, given the importance of this matter and the controversy it has created. Jim’s views should be heard and considered which, at this point, has not occurred because you have not permitted it to occur. It’s neither adequate nor appropriate that his views be conveyed by you and Wanda alone.

C. Serious Harm to USC

Your actions are causing grievous harm to the school. Think about it: You and the Interim President removed a super-popular, super-successful Dean without any factual basis, to further your version of “institutional culture” and “core values.” By your action, you’ve roiled the campus, the faculty, students, and Marshall School alumni and donors.

Under these circumstances, what qualified candidate would leave a good, stable position to come to a school governed by the Rick Caruso/Wanda Austin version of “core values” and “institutional culture?” And there’s even a more serious and far-reaching issue implicated here: the search for a new President.

Surely, any reputable, qualified candidate will do his or her research and quickly come upon what you’ve done to Jim Ellis. Who would take the risk that you’ll do the same thing to



them? Jim Ellis has done everything, and more, to make the Marshall School successful, and look how you treat him.

I fear that this all will have a negative effect on the search for the new President, and it certainly has already been harmful to the University. In effect, you've turned USC into your own arbitrary and capricious fiefdom, where you do what suits you without regard for the consequences.

I'm deeply concerned for the University I graduated from, serve as a Trustee for and have given so much to; and I think other Deans, faculty members, students, alumni and donors share my concern for the way in which you've bungled the Jim Ellis situation and are acting overall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ming Hsieh', written in a cursive style.

Ming Hsieh
Chairman/CEO
Fulgent Therapeutics
Minghsieh@fulgent-therapeutics.com



Attachment

cc: Board of Trustees
Miriam Adelson
Michael Adler
Wallis Annenberg
Stephanie Argyros
Wanda Austin
Thomas J. Barrack, Jr.
Marc Benioff
David Bohnett
Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Joseph M. Boskovich Sr.
Robert A. Bradway
Jeanie M. Buss
Charles G. Cale
Ramona L. Cappello
Rick Caruso
Alan I. Casden
Ronnie C. Chan
Yang Ho Cho
Chris Cox
Frank H. Cruz
David H. Dornsife
Suzanne Dworak-Peck
Michele Dedeaux Engemann
Daniel J. Epstein
Stanley Gold
Tamara Hughes Gustavson
Jane Harman
Lydia H. Kennard
Kenneth R. Klein
John Kusmiersky
Jaime L. Lee
Kathy Leventhal
William J. McMorrow
John Mork
Oscar Munoz
Rod Y. Nakamoto
Carmen Nava
Shelly L. Nemirovksy



Dominic Ng
Suzanne Nora Johnson
J. Kristoffer Popovich
Blake Quinn
Edward P. Roski Jr.
Amy A. Ross
Frederick J. Ryan Jr.
Leonard D. Schaeffer
William E.B. Siart
Jeffrey H. Smulyan
Steven Spielberg
Heliane M. Steden
Mark A. Stevens
Ronald D. Sugar
Tracy M. Sykes
Daniel M. Tsai
Ronald N. Tutor
Wenxue Wang
Malcolm R. Currie
Gavin S. Herbert
B. Wayne Hughes Sr.
Ray R. Irani
Glorya Kaufman
John F. King
Daniel D. Lane
William Lyon
Claude Mann
Kathleen L. McCarthy
Jerry W. Neely
C. L. Max Nikias
J. Douglas Pardee
Joan A. Payden
Frank Price
Bruce M. Ramer
Lorna Y. Reed
William J. Schoen
Robert H. Smith
Richard J. Stegemeier
Ratan N. Tata
Peter V. Ueberroth
Andrew J. Viterbi



Willis B. Wood Jr.
Helene Galen
Dallas Price-Van Breda
Michael Quick

Marshall School Faculty Council Report

On the Decision to Ask Dean Jim Ellis to Step Down

prepared for a meeting of the USC Academic Senate
on Monday, December 10, 2018

Marshall Faculty Council

Dr. Yingying Fan

Dr. Elissa Grossman, Chair

Dr. Larry Harris

Dr. Sharoni Little

Dr. Dan O'Leary

Dr. Gulden Ulkumen

Dr. Lori Yue

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

Immediately after learning of the University's decision to ask for Dean Jim Ellis' resignation, the Marshall School Faculty Council began receiving numerous comments and questions from Marshall faculty. To facilitate information gathering, we solicited feedback from faculty through a survey distributed to a painstakingly double-checked list of all active full- and part-time faculty members – totaling 296 individuals. We received 210 responses within 48 hours of our request (= 71% of all surveyed, an objectively very high response rate for any survey).

In an effort to maximize accuracy of data collection, we worked with our IT department – and, through IT, with Qualtrics – to ensure that a unique link was distributed to each surveyed individual. In an effort to protect individual identities (to reduce any potential fear of retribution), all unique links were anonymized. (Note: six of the 210 individuals were not anonymized because the respondents reported technical problems that required survey reissuance with new links. Identities for these six were neither downloaded nor read during downloading. There is no evidence that survey results were influenced – upwards or downwards – by their inclusion.)

The survey opened with a clear expression of interest in *all* faculty perspectives, as here excerpted: “To help us prepare for [a] meeting [with University leadership], we would like to hear from every faculty member about any relevant issues or questions. We will aggregate and distill the comments for use in our ongoing discussions.” The survey did ask for information on home department, faculty status (e.g., tenure, tenure-track, RTPC), and demographics, but with a clear explanation that these data would be used solely to explore differences or discernible patterns; all such questions included a “prefer not to answer” option.

To capture perspectives, we offered four Likert-type scale item statements, as shown below. By virtue of the clear option to express disagreement or neutrality (or to opt out), we feel these statements embraced all views. The items and scale are shown below.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	I completely disagree	I disagree	Neutral	I agree	I completely agree	N/A
The University should provide additional information to faculty prior to finalizing this decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University should solicit faculty input prior to finalizing this decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dean Ellis has performed well in his Marshall School role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect that Dean Ellis, if retained, will continue to provide excellent leadership to the Marshall School.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Responses were strongly supportive of each above statement, with mean scores of 4.8, 4.7, 4.6, and 4.5 across the statements respectively (mode = 5.0). Analysis of these scores across different faculty and demographic categories did not reveal statistically significant differences.

The survey also included one open-ended question: "Please provide any additional feedback (questions, comments, etc.) below." We include all answers to this question here. It was difficult, candidly, for us to review these comments. We share them in part because nothing we say in just our small group can appropriately convey the strong emotional tone of the feedback we received. To supplement the comments themselves, because we feel it is our responsibility to accurately communicate the feedback to you, we compiled and examined all statements carefully.

We identified three main themes in the Marshall faculty feedback.

- The most prevalent theme concerned the faculty's feelings toward both decision-making process used and decision. Our faculty said they were feeling "concerned", "shocked," "troubled," "disturbed," "fearful," "dismayed," "upset," and "outraged."
- The second theme that appeared with great frequency was the faculty's perception that the university's decision to ask for Dean Ellis's resignation was lacking in due process and transparency. In fact, the words "process" and "transparency" were the two most frequent words that showed up in the comments, as well as "unfair." What seems to be most troubling for Marshall faculty in this process is that, to the best of our knowledge, the university did not communicate any concerns, share information, or ask for faculty and/or student input during their investigation.
- The third theme that we observed was faculty's strong support of Dean Ellis. In particular, we received many personal accounts of his fair, unbiased, and supportive treatment of faculty and students. The faculty have also observed that during Dean Ellis' tenure the atmosphere of the Marshall School has improved tremendously (both subjectively and objectively), especially in areas of equity and diversity.

SURVEY COMMENTS

I hope that this decision can be reversed so that Dean Ellis can stay in his role of Dean of the Marshall School of Business. He has been a phenomenal leader and accomplished more in his tenure than any other Dean.
I have had two students visually upset in my office today about his termination. In addition to being an excellent supporter of our faculty & the Marshall School of Business - he is the most student supportive dean!
Dean Ellis is the best. Retain him for sure.
Dean Ellis is the epitome of a leader and exactly what USC, Marshall and any other institution needs as a leader. He is fair, honest, impeccable with his word and gives opportunities to under represented communities. He is the heart and soul of this university.
We cannot lose this fantastic Dean and all he has done for Marshall. There needs to be a better process to understand the facts and the Leadership decision. Dean Ellis should be allowed to finish his term as Dean
Dean Ellis has done a wonderful job!! He needs to stay. There is no evidence that he has done anything wrong or that he knew about anything and covered it up. What is happening right now is wrong and is another example of USC's lack of transparency and arbitrary actions. I am embarrassed to be a Trojan today.
I am alumni, professor and USC Marshall parent and I feel Dean Ellis is one of the finest people I know. Such a shame for the Trojan family to treat him this way.
I have never been more outraged by the actions of the university. This is so non-transparent and heavy-handed. With all the scandals the university has gone through, what we need more than anything is a culture of transparency.
I'm deeply concerned that our university is acting in a manner that is unfair to Marshall and will cause reputational damage, lower morale, and less willingness to step into leadership roles. I'm also shocked at the disrespectful way Jim has been treated in this process.
The change in leadership at the university was because of lack of transparency and due process. It is amazing that the same lack of transparency and due process is completely missing in this decision.
The utter lack of transparency is a huge problem - rather than foster a better environment, to ask a dean to step down with no input from the faculty, staff or students of the school does nothing but create chaos. If the interim president has evidence of poor performance on the dean's part, that should be shared with the community he serves. If there is no serious complaint, and this is preemptive, or a PR move, that is troubling.
is this a witch hunt? Clearly we need more information from the President
Does anyone remember McCarthyism?
I think this is a decision that should be reviewed carefully before a final decision is made. I am concerned how the decision to relieve a dean that is loved and respected can impact USC Marshall.
Marshall School under Dean Ellis has been a bright and consistent force for the university during the turbulence. At the minimum, everyone deserves transparency and clarity of why and what led to the decision especially if we are promoting the inclusiveness.
Dean Ellis has been a strong steward for the organization. He is a talented development agent, and has found ways to continue to bring top-flight students, top-dollar donors, and top talent to Marshall. We as faculty are then allowed to teach, research, and grow to our heart's content. I appreciate his mild-mannered approach to our collective. Could he be more engaged? Sure. Does that make him a poor leader; quite the contrary. Dean Ellis knows his role, and helps others make decisions, as needed. He doesn't overstep, and I appreciate what he does for us as a community. If the OED stuff is serious, he has to go. I agree. If he was unaware of it, and didn't take the proactive approach to the matters, I think he can learn. I would rather he be reprimanded than terminated at this point.
I am shocked and concerned by this news. Without any facts provided or supporting information detailed to the faculty it appears, from what little has been communicated, that the statements made by one "very concerned

alum" have impacted decision making at the highest levels. That is troubling, especially if those statements are unfounded or based purely on statistics from the OED without any analysis.
Jim Ellis is relentlessly positive and committed to the growth of Marshall and USC. I am a minority and have NEVER felt the least bit discriminated against during my stay at Marshall. I have NEVER felt anything other than full, unequivocal support from Jim Ellis and asking him to step down for reasons of equity and diversity would be a travesty of everything USC supposedly is moving towards.
The manner in which this transition has been communicated has created far more questions than answers and has done little to instill confidence in the process.
Without knowing any of the details - because they were not shared - it looks like from the outside that Dean Ellis was asked to leave just to create the impression that USC is trying to make changes. But just changing things up for the sake of changing things would be a bad idea. Finding a good dean is extremely difficult and so, unless there really is a good reason for letting Dean Ellis go, I hope he is not removed just to create favorable optics.
I think it is unconscionable that this action has developed -- without due process or eliciting comments from those who know Dean Ellis and work in Marshall and are intimately familiar with the positive benefits he has brought to our school and university.
I think all of Marshall should VEHEMENTLY fight to retain Dean Ellis as our leader.
He is a mentor. A beacon. A great teacher and great leader.
After having a long tenure as the Dean of Marshall School, it would not be unusual to ask for a change in leadership. The University is going through major changes, and it is understandable to seek a change of leadership at the Business School, to align the priorities of the School with the rest of the University. However, I am disturbed by the way this decision is handled. If Dean Ellis committed a serious offense, he would be fired effective immediately. If he did not, which seems to be the case, then he should have been allowed to continue his work and complete his term.
Jim has been our leader since he took the position. I have found him to be of stellar character, ethics and concern for all faculty, students and alumni. He has inspired us to be the best we can be. I am shocked by this announcement.
I am absolutely shocked by the process (or absence thereof) and the decision by the interim (!) President. We have a positive culture at Marshall and Jim does nothing but to promote the culture of the school. Not consulting the faculty just shows that the office of the President has learned NOTHING from this year, namely that faculty input should be taken seriously in the governance of the school. This is particularly baffling and disappointing since President Austin is holding this position in large part due to the USC faculty making their voices heard. This "process" (if it can be called that) is unacceptable. It shows that administration has really not changed at all.
From my point of view it seems like the university is trying to "solve" problems that are not there to show "progress" beyond creating positions and committee (which seems to be all they have done). Marshall and particularly Jim, are not the problem or if we are, they have not provided us with any data or evidence and have not given us the opportunity to respond. If there are problems, we should be allowed to correct them, but the way this comes across is a politically and monetarily (to avoid anything that can lead to greater payments for the pending lawsuits) witch hunt.
I would like for President Austin to a) provide any evidence that lead to this decision to the Marshall community b) allow the faculty to form their own opinion c) take the will of the Marshall community which requires to first figure out what that is when we have full information.
I want to thank the faculty council for responding swiftly and for representing the faculty to the administration. This year has shown how important faculty governance is for the university at large and I am very disappointed that USC seems to have not changed at all.

This is a travesty and there appears to be no due process. Dean Ellis is a GREAT leader and, unless some solid evidence is presented of any purported misdeeds, he should absolutely be permitted to keep his position as Dean of Marshall School.

How does the OED office communicate with schools? Cases were not brought to Dean Ellis' attention. It is not clear how (or if) OED informs school leadership on a regular basis about frequency and type of cases - if that is not happening, then how can a school take action to reduce an assumed high number of cases? Dean Ellis is an exceptional leader and a proactive one. He would immediately have investigated and developed strategy to confront any problem, had he been informed.

By the same token - how does Marshall compare to other schools in terms of number of such cases? What has the trend been of OED cases? Both in frequency and type for all schools? And are other deans in a similar situation? These are just a few questions; however, it seems unreasonable, unfair, and unjust to ask a very successful dean, who has actively and successfully engaged in building a collegial culture over the years, who is well-known and very accessible to students, faculty, and staff.

I'm not sure how removing him will address any presumed OED case problem and if all factors and implications of such removal are being considered (i.e., impact on students, faculty, staff, reputation, etc.).

This is a shocking development that has huge implications for Marshall and USC too. The abrupt nature of this decision and the lack of any discussion with key stakeholders leaves me baffled and very worried about the University senior leadership.

I really felt this decision came out of nowhere

This seems to have come out of nowhere! I am just totally shocked.

From everything I have seen, Marshall has been run in an exemplary faculty. As a female faculty member, I have been heartened to see a dramatic rise in female leadership since I have been here, with women occupying several senior visible leadership roles. In addition, as someone who started my job at Marshall with children, and had a child while on the tenure track, I have found Marshall to be extremely accepting of my choices and supportive of my trajectory despite my decision to have a family before getting tenure. In fact, in my home department, ALL of the junior women (assistant and associate) have young children, and most made the decision to start families on the tenure track while at Marshall. Struggling to see how this extremely supportive environment for nurturing female faculty fits with the picture being portrayed of a toxic culture....

Given the uniformly awful performances of the university's bureaucracy in the Tyndall, Puliafito and Varma matters, it's hard to place confidence in the OED or the Provost's office now.

In those cases, faculty and the public had to rely on The Los Angeles Times to bring transparency to USC. That practice should stop.

While some personnel matter must of course remain private, it's far past time that university leaders learn the value of the free flow of information.

I support Jim and all of the great work that has been done at USC Marshall.

The effort to remove Jim Ellis is misguided, counterproductive and sets OED back ten years.

It is because Marshall is at the forefront, having open and honest discussions and creating safe spaces that individuals are now coming forward - individuals who often would be hidden, marginalized, discouraged or afraid in other units and in other Universities are now coming forward and this should be seen as a good thing. This is typical and often seen in research - the best performing medical teams often initially report the most number of medical errors as they feel safe to not hide issues and to learn and grow from mistakes. It is also seen regularly in behavioral training. When conducting diversity training, the self reported bias initially increases as people build awareness of their past behaviors and become motivated to change. We should expect OED cases to actually increase after training, focus and greater awareness - a clear sign of success in long term awareness, safety and cultural change.

This is a classic case of a typical error top leadership teams make due to a poor level of awareness of what success will initially look like and a desire to prioritize activity - even disruptive and counter productive - at the expense of meaningful change. I see this error in organizations around the World undergoing positive change. In this case from the top level of USC, there is a clear indication of not properly anticipating the inevitable initial impact of greater openness, honesty and awareness that Jim Ellis has directly and indirectly brought to Marshall.

To be clear, Marshall over the last 20 years has had issues. And legacy issues can be messy to clean up - and Jim Ellis walked into a mess - and it can take a lot of time. Now the University is removing the one leader that has actually addressed it, brought issues to light and started us on the sometimes uncomfortable pathway to a healthy future. To remove him is to prioritize sound and fury over strategic healing, to illegitimate and destroy the OED and to strongly motivate the old duck, hide and cover versus the openness, professionalism and healing that Jim Ellis has represented.

As a Marshall faculty, I can personally tell you the effort to remove Jim Ellis is deeply misguided, tremendously counterproductive and will destroy the legitimacy of the OED.

I would like to better understand the request for Dean Ellis's resignation. I have a very positive impression of Jim as Dean of Marshall. If the complaints were filed recently with OED, it seems like he should have the opportunity (now that he's aware) to rectify any issues. It seems like small steps are being take (e.g., the diversity and inclusion workshops for departments) - based on my experience in our department workshop, I think there's lots of work that needs to be done to help faculty understand issues related to diversity and inclusion... but steps have been taken.

I am torn, because Jim Ellis seems to have been a strong leader overall, and I believe faculty should be informed in this decision-making process (although not necessarily serve as decision-makers themselves). This is, in part, because we as a university must have a zero-tolerance policy against any sexual harassment-related issues (if that's what this is), and in that case leaders should be dismissed with no question. However - and I suspect this is more the case, hence my concern - if this is all EOD-related and Jim Ellis didn't have an opportunity to respond or wasn't made aware of some of these allegations, then faculty /other stakeholders need to hear about it in an effort to remain transparent and just in the overall process. More transparency overall is needed about this issue.

I do not understand why this request was made. Finally the Business School is getting back on track and rankings are going up. Dean Ellis is one of the most approachable Deans. I hope this decision can be reversed or additional information provided.

The lack of transparency is troubling. If something legitimately occurred, then the Dean should be removed immediately. However, the fact that he's remaining for 6 more months tells me that nothing of grave concern is happening. Therefore, what's up?

James Ellis has been the best Dean that the MSB has ever had. He is a person of the utmost integrity and has provided incredible leadership for the school. Removing him from his position without a full hearing/investigation is unconscionable. We are in an environment now it seems that accusations become "truth" without due process. As someone who has known Jim Ellis and worked with him for 20 years I can vouch for his moral character and he deserves a chance to be heard. The MSB has improved dramatically since Jim took office and firing him now without providing clear reasons will do immense damage to the school. Thank you,

As stated in Lloyd Greif's letter this is embarrassing and a will cause long term damage to USC and Marshall if Jimmis forced out as Dean. He is the best Dean USC has ever had and we are fortunate to work with him.

As a female faculty member (and alumnus) I support Dean Ellis 100%. He has done nothing but support and mentor me in my 16 years teaching at USC. I am very troubled by this decision. It will kill the momentum we have at the Marshall School. I urge the President to reconsider. This is stupid. It is unfair to treat Jim this way after everything he has done for USC and for Marshall. I would consider leaving to go to a different University if this decision stands.

Dean Ellis has been absolutely wonderful. It is a terrible mistake to ask him to step down. I'm very disappointed that Dean Ellis has been asked to step down. Please reconsider. USC has a number of problems that need to be addressed in the wake of the George Tyndall tragedy but Dean Ellis is part of the solution not part of the problem. I have known him as a graduate student and as a part-time adjunct faculty member. I am happy to provide any information needed. Feel free to contact me
Jim has been and would likely continue to be the best dean that the Marshall School has every had. The request for his resignation is shocking and unimaginable. The notion that he is insensitive to diversity issues is completely wrong. I fear that he is being ousted because he has been identified as old USC: White, male, Anglo Saxon, Protestant from San Marino. If so, this would be a classic case of reverse discrimination. The University screwed up in the Keck School when the president did not listen to the faculty about the dean. Now, another president proposes to oust Ellis without even consulting with the faculty. His ouster would be very demoralizing to the School. I cannot see how it promotes USC's mission.
The action by the university is completely incomprehensible on face value. It was done in secret, without faculty input, and is exactly the type of decision-making that we must fight against. This action says less about Dean Ellis and more about the University's inadequate procedures...which we had hoped would have improved. We must also be careful, in this time of "Guilty before proven innocent", that we do not rush to judgement. That is not who we are. We must also be careful not to make all leadership responsible for all actions of subordinates. Many leaders, like Jim, must be recognized as part of the solution and not as part of the problem. If we cannot recognize the difference, we are lost.
Jim Ellis is the best thing that has happened to Marshall, period. I have seen steady improvement, across the board, in my 18 years here.
I believe that it is foundational to fairness and excellence that all employees of the university should be treated equally without regard to their age race gender or sexual preferences. In the absence of enlightening details it appears that there may not have been an application of this key principal in this instance.
Jim Ellis has been a great dean. He has a kinder, gentler mentality that has made Marshall a terrific place to work.
I am deeply troubled by the decision to terminate his appointment this year. I would strongly favor reappointing him to another full term.
<p>Comments in favor of Dean Jim Ellis</p> <p>Complete rejuvenation of morale which had been negatively impacted by Yash Gupta</p> <p>Wonderful charismatic person who knows everyone in town - all who know him speak highly of him.</p> <p>This ability allows him to contact people who can get the job done - whatever the job may be.</p> <p>The caliber of recruits in Marshall has dramatically improved.</p> <p>He is open and approachable at all times and provides funds for any reasonable request.</p> <p>Many new Masters programs have been developed which are successful and increase our reputation - veterans program is an example.</p> <p>Most open individual and totally honest.</p> <p>Each faculty member is allowed flexibility - but within the common theme of making the Trojan family look good at all times</p> <p>His support re facilities and equipment is excellent.</p> <p>He does a fine job and is respectful and encouraging re diversity, which is difficult because in the past minorities have not entered fields of accounting and taxation.</p> <p>100% accessible and available. I have been at USC a long time and Dean Ellis is the best.</p> <p>Excellent fundraising. The immense amount of pride I feel when I mention Dean Ellis outside the university and everyone has great things to say about him - always!</p> <p>Improved our MBA rankings substantially in latest survey.</p>
This is a surprising, alarming, and concerning development. A decision of this magnitude should be announced alongside clear rationale ahead of time. In the absence of a clear ethical violation (which should be announced, if that is the case) I would expect that the firing of a dean, if deserved, would be met with responses like, "yep, s/he had it coming." or "that's a bold move, but makes sense." In contrast, the responses I've heard are more

along the lines of "what the hell is going on here?" That's not a good response to be engendering in the school and alumni base.
The decision to terminate Jim Ellis will have huge negative consequences for the school and will completely kill the momentum that Marshall has currently achieved. Dean Ellis is like no other dean that the school has had -- he has an open door policy for both students and faculty and has made Marshall a world class institution. Unless he has done something on par with the deans of Keck, I do not understand why this decision has been reached.
<p>Why has Dean Ellis been asked to resign?</p> <p>In terms of using language that reflects gender diversity and inclusivity, the dean has made a few minor and still common mistakes i.e. referring to fathers (and not mothers) as the ones who pay for their child's tuition - However, he himself acknowledged these errors in a faculty meeting and humbly discussed how he was seeking to use more appropriate, inclusive language. This is the only diversity and inclusion issue related to the dean of which I'm aware.</p> <p>MARSHALL FACULTY NEED TRANSPARENCY!!</p>
<p>I think it is outrageous that this decision has been made without any input from the faculty, staff or students. It seems to run completely counter to recent proclamations by the university in its call for transparency and faculty governance. It also seems to be an over-reaction to the Tyndall scandal.</p> <p>It is my understanding (and perhaps I am incorrect) that Jim would NOT be privy to equity and diversity accusations made against a member of the Marshall community unless they have been found to be valid. Why would the Dean be responsible for things about which he has no knowledge?</p>
<p>I have been impressed with Dean Ellis without exception in any and all of his activities both in public and in smaller group meetings. I am very against a decision to ask Dean Ellis to resign for actions that relate to cultural issues at Marshall that were not his doing. He is truly a stand-up leader for the school and also somebody who inspires faculty to go the extra mile and always do what is right.</p> <p>In fact, Dean Ellis has spoken on issues of diversity and equality on many occasions. In the last school-wide meeting, in fact, he ceded at least half the meeting to an expert on this topic, who engaged the faculty in how to best interact with people from diverse backgrounds and to be inclusive. I truly believe he is a role model. Beyond that, his judgment as a leader is also terrific. The school has been gaining prestige and recognition at a break-neck pace, and all for the right reasons. It takes a good leader to inspire new faculty to come to Marshall, to retain existing faculty, and to keep them engaged.</p> <p>I worry deeply about how well we can do by picking a new Dean through the usual process. It is almost a certainty that quality will be lower. And having lived under a bad Dean in the past, it risks losing all that Dean Ellis helped to build. I hope this decision can be reconsidered and that faculty can have more of a voice.</p>
Jim is (and has been) an excellent Dean. If there is private information about some egregious behavior, he should of course be terminated immediately. But, absent such information, his premature termination is a disservice to the Marshall School and the University.
Dean Ellis has been a Great Leader and Role Model for the Marshall School of Business.
As much as I value the positive contributions of having a diverse faculty body in several aspects of life here in Marshall, the overriding factor in hiring and retaining talent must be merit. It would be the downfall of USC as a world class research university if this basic driver of faculty quality is pushed down in the list.
I think this is going to hurt Marshall tremendously in terms of fundraising, resources, and retaining faculty. If Dean Ellis had nothing to do with the issues at play, then I disagree completely with this decision. Due process must be acknowledged and applied or no one is safe in this place with mandatory arbitration agreements that we had to sign at hiring. If it is true that Dean Ellis is not at fault, then I support rehiring him after a new president is installed. Throwing him under the bus for an unrelated expense will hurt us all.
He is being made a scapegoat for an administration that promises transparency and then does this. Unconscionable.

I am shocked by this move by the University. Dean Ellis has been a wonderful colleague and did a great job in leading the school. I am very sorry to see him go, especially in this manner.
Jim is a very nice man and an exceptional fundraiser. However, as a leader, he did not have a handle on Marshall and its ongoing issues with how faculty and staff were being mistreated. He allowed certain of his direct reports to violate university policy with immunity from any consequences. I think the term plausible deniability comes to mind.
Nothing will change at Marshall unless leadership changes at the top. I believe President Austin and the university made the correct decision to end his deanship next year.
What we should be more concerned about is how do we make it up to the individuals who have been harmed. They are victims of a system that did not care about them but rather protecting the perpetrators. They suffered and no one cared until OED had to step in. Jim will be missed but he needs to go.
I have no confidence that the University handles personnel issues professionally. I have real concerns about the "cone of silence" the University has maintained about recent university scandals. Dean Ellis is a good man who deserves to know the charges against him. And the faculty should be advised as well.
I find this decision to be hard to understand. The University is going through a period of substantial uncertainty. Jim Ellis has been in the Dean's position for a number of years and has been a champion of USC and the Marshall School. One could argue with the initial decision to make Jim Ellis the Dean of the Marshall School. But, the decision to remove Dean Ellis without new leadership in the central administration seems to be very risky. You might ask some folks who have been around for awhile about the issue of Marshall School Dean turnover prior to the beginning of Jim's tenure as Dean of the Marshall School. It's not easy to find a top Dean willing to come to USC's Marshall School. I would urge that this decision be tabled until the new president is in place and making decisions for the future of our school.
Stunning. I don't know what we're teaching our students, but it's certainly not to take responsibility or to hold themselves accountable - 'just complain to mommy if you're ever offended and she'll kill off the issue.' And I don't know what we're thinking with regard to 'eating ourselves alive' over 'who-knows-what' petty issues of the day. This doesn't make us stronger, it makes us rather ridiculous. And it doesn't prepare our students for the real world, it makes them increasingly dependent and intolerant.
I am a part-time adjunct and have not had meaningful interaction with Dean Ellis
This is disturbing news! I believe there should be more transparency for reasons behind this decision.
It would appear that the University continues to "shoot itself in the foot" regarding communication, transparency and due process regarding all of its governance processes (in fact it now appears intent to empty the entire chamber of the gun!). As a practical matter the faculty know little of what is going on now nor what has gone on in the past other than via the reporting of the Los Angeles Times. Given the lack of substantive information available for dissemination I felt the Marshall School (and Dean Ellis) did what they should have done: the Marshall School and Dean Ellis constantly reminded the faculty that at the end of day we are all here for our students and whatever we do day to day should be done with that singular objective in mind.
I have personally known Dean Ellis for almost twenty years and it would be completely out of character for him to have not directly dealt with any OED matter (or any other matter) brought to his attention. I would further point out that irrespective of whether one agrees or not with my previous statement, to unilaterally remove the Dean of the Marshall School without any evidence being offered of direct mismanagement or other behavior by the Dean that is directly inconsistent with the University's code of conduct, bylaws, governance guidelines, etc... is in of itself gross mismanagement.
If there is evidence of direct inappropriate conduct by the Dean then you say so and also state that because of privacy concerns you are not going to share that evidence immediately. However, a well run organization absolutely would share that direct evidence with Dean Ellis (if for no other reason than to ensure that he doesn't have evidence that would directly contradict the University's conclusion). Unless the University is prepared to characterize Dean Ellis as a liar, then the email that Dean Ellis sent to the

Marshall faculty this morning would strongly suggest that he does not know specifically what the violation was that caused him to be so aggressively terminated.

Finally, I would ask that in addition to questioning the process (or lack thereof) that led to Dean Ellis' termination, the Marshall Faculty Council find the time to focus on the students and the faculty who are at risk of becoming mildly to moderately disengaged due to this incident. Clearly the University at large does not share this concern.

The (very vague) announcement came as a complete surprise to me, and it is still entirely unclear what occurred under Dean Ellis' leadership that would warrant such a drastic move from an Interim President. Per the message, it sounds as though the Faculty Council did not see this coming either. Dean Ellis' message refers to a "cumulative record of OED cases," which I am guessing refers to Equity and Diversity (?), though I am not aware what type of transgressions have occurred here at Marshall. If anything, I thought the (Vice) Dean's Office was extremely strong in their direction to increase diversity in this year's hiring cycle. Thanks for looking into this development!

I have been at Marshall for almost twenty years and interact with Dean Ellis from time to time. I have seen Marshall grow and improve under Dean Ellis's tenure. As one of Marshall's few faculty of color, I believe the climate at Marshall has become more welcoming over the years. Dean Ellis has always been forward-looking, and in my opinion, our community has become more engaged, enlightened, and collaborative. I was shocked to receive the "All Marshall" email from Dean Ellis this morning (Dec. 3, 2018). This was my first time hearing about the interim President's request that Dean Ellis step down. I'm concerned that faculty input was not solicited as part of the decision-making process and that the process has not been transparent. Over the years, both the Faculty Council and Dean Ellis have endeavored to create a climate of openness, fairness, and justice. These values seem to be missing from the decision that all members of the Marshall community have now been made aware of.

This is so unfair and so non-transparent. It is shameful for the university to manage and conduct a critical leadership process that way. Dean Ellis is the last person in the world to be accused of such behavior. He has always preserved human dignity in all his dealings with staff and faculty. We are being robbed of an excellent leader who has improved the school and provided stability and a nurturing environment -- and without even knowing why! I am extremely upset and angry at this way of treating an empathetic honest human being and excellent leader. Shame on you USC for such callous blanketing!! And with no regard for the impacts that this will have on the Marshall School of Business. And it is very disrespectful of all the efforts that Dean Ellis has done for USC and Marshall. He is being subjected to public embarrassment for apparently crimes he did not commit. I hope that this decision is reconsidered fairly rather than digging in heels.

Dean Ellis has provided leadership far beyond that I thought possible from a Business School Dean. He is a role-model of thoughtful, ethical, and compassionate leadership. The school will be significantly harmed should he step down. Not only USC, but Business Schools across America, are better because of Dean Ellis.

I completely agree with the sentiments expressed in the letter written by Lloyd Greif regarding Dean Ellis. Of course, I am opening to revising my views should credible information emerge that implicates Dean Ellis in some egregious scandal or profound act of incompetence. However, I highly doubt such evidence exists. Taken in its totality, Dean Ellis's performance during his tenure has been exceptionally good. He has proven his commitment and care for the university, school, faculty, staff, and students time and again. Continuity of leadership at the school level is especially important during this time of upheaval for the broader university. I hope the powers that be reconsider this rash recommendation and ultimately choose to retain Dean Ellis.

Firing the dean on the basis of complaints without proof of personal wrong doing, without a full investigation on the truth of the complaints, and without a chance for a defense (assuming innocent until proven guilty) makes USC a very scary place to be and seriously affects whether I as a junior level tenure-track faculty want to continue in such a university. Such sudden firing seriously damages the reputation of the school and the prospect of hiring good candidates for the future. It will only incentivize overly defensive actions by the senior leaders without true vision or leadership.

I am thoroughly sickened by this horrible news. Dean Ellis is a gift to this university from everything I know and have personally experienced. I am willing to put myself out on a limb to defend Dean Ellis who has been

wonderful to me and my family. I take this request for his resignation personally and am prepared to defend him to the end. Please don't make me do that bc I would rather not, but I am a person of principle and I am loyal and will speak my mind when it comes to this seemingly inconceivable announcement.

There may well be some isolated cases of individuals who fail to meet the standards of inclusiveness required in a modern university setting, but these are the exception rather than the rule. Removing Dean Ellis is the LAST thing that should be done to address this. There is probably no one could can better help achieve consensus within and among the different constituencies of the school. He has shown a great deal of concern for students and for attracting underrepresented groups. It should be noted that business majors, having studied management, may be much more empowered than students in many other majors to be able to file complaints if they feel their rights have been violated. This move really comes across as a way to demonstrate that action has been taken to address medical school and student health problems. It is not appropriate to remove a Dean as a public relations move. It seems grossly unfair that Michael Quick--who approved some of the questionable settlements--is still here if there is this kind of talk.

Based on what limited information we have received, this appears to be related to issues from OED offices not responding to OED initiatives. The email from the dean suggests that this is related to the culture around the business school.

My impression of the school is that there is an acknowledgement of these issues in broader society and an intention to take steps to address them. However, I do believe that at the level of the university, there is a lack of information regarding what are actionable steps to be taken. For instance, while there is considerable information about why this is important (which is absolutely clear), there is a lack of actionable information on how faculty should conduct themselves and what steps we should take. The faculty training events and other information we have received have lacked the element of "actionability". It is also not clear what are the policies for violations, how those violations should be addressed, etc. I believe it would be helpful if there were more actionable guidelines. This would help avoid the types of issues that have lead to this.

Regarding the actions of the Dean himself, I have always found him very willing to confront any issue raised by the faculty or students (particularly important issues such as these), so I was surprised by these events.

As a female RTPC faculty member who has been at Marshall for over 15 years, I feel the culture here is supportive and fair. In my experience, Dean Ellis is a fantastic leader, who has created an incredibly positive, growth-oriented work environment at Marshall and has put the School on a steep upward trajectory.

From my perspective as a female faculty member who is from an underrepresented minority group, I sincerely believe Dean Ellis is doing an excellent job of creating a diverse, inclusive environment at Marshall. He is an exceptional leader, a champion for our faculty and students, and a visionary who has helped Marshall become the top-ranked Business School that it is today. It is unfortunate that the very same faculty he has led so successfully for over a decade were not asked for input regarding this decision. Most, if not all of us at Marshall, feel blindsided by this decision. We feel that excluding us from such a drastic decision goes against the very core of inclusivity and transparency in faculty governance. Jim Ellis is an exceptional leader, and it is my hope and the hope of my colleagues that the University will not make the serious mistake of asking him to step down without conducting any due diligence. Please show all Marshall faculty the respect we deserve by taking into consideration how WE feel about Jim Ellis as an excellent, visionary leader for our school.

He's a big reason why we have come here, stay here, and strive to perform at a world-class level.

In most organizations, an Interim President is just that...interim and essentially a lame duck. As such, the interim is basically a placeholder and should not be empowered to make such sweeping decisions. Furthermore, in issues such as this, faculty should be entitled to review the full report. It can be redacted for names, but the facts, events, dates and locations should be disclosed.

Dean Ellis has been an effective leader of the Marshall school overall. He has his strengths (excellent fundraising, building personal relationships with students, alums, faculty and staff) and weaknesses (difficulty in saying "no"). But I have interacted with him a few times and found him to be very supportive of faculty and staff of any gender or race. The lack of transparency in decision-making. at the university level shocks me. Not a single senior university administrator has met with Marshall faculty over the past few years. So, it is shocking

that this decision has been made without any faculty input. They should at least have met with the faculty council before making this decision.

I was very surprised and disappointed to receive the email I received today. I do not know why a Dean of such long-standing service would be so abruptly dismissed without cause and in what seems like a disrespectful way. Please note, that if there is cause I would expect that we would get more information in a more transparent fashion. Isn't that what the University is working toward, after the problems of the past year. How could this possibly raise morale? What are the rest of us, who serve USC, Marshall, and our students supposed to interpret such an action? What does this imply for the security of the rest of us? This is not seem in keeping with what I have known as the very high standards of USC in the past.

Q1, Q2. My understanding is that the decision has already been made, so the questions seem inapplicable.

Q4. We would have to understand the reasons for the president/provost's decision to assess how things would work out if Dean Ellis were to continue. (And again, I don't understand why this question is being asked since the decision has been made.)

We could not ask for a better person to so serve. It would be tragic if he were to be removed. The school and particularly FBE has been aggressive in attempting to widen the diversity of our faculty.

I completely agree with the mission that USC-Marshall should have an inclusive environment that encourages diversity in all its dimensions. As a global University that relies on diverse talents on a global scale we also should be thoughtful how we go about building the inclusive and diverse culture. If diversity and inclusiveness is defined in a narrow sense and executed in that manner then it will have a negative effect on the intellectual leadership of Marshall and USC. If the execution of the very desirable goal is pursued without respecting the many dimensions it can have a chilling effect on honest intellectual discussion which is key to thought leadership.

He is an incredible person, leader, and educator.

Although I currently hold the rank of Senior Lecturer, I have over 35 years of university faculty experience. I retired to California from an Endowed Full Professor with tenure. Dean Ellis is the best Dean I have ever had the pleasure of knowing and working with.

I take personal offense in the claims for no positive culture at Marshall. I am proud of the culture in Marshall and believe that Dean Ellis contributed significantly to the success of the school in his continuous connection with faculty and the passion in which he performs his job.

The hesitation for answering some of the questions above is due to lack of information on my part and executive privilege on the part of President Austin.

Jim is a fun guy, but there are too many problems at Marshall and he has not made any efforts of solving them. The lack of transparency is a big problem at Marshall. Not everybody is treated equally "some are more equal than others". I like him as a person a lot but I do not think he should continue in this position.

I am very discouraged by how this was handled. I feel like the University has failed its Marshall community. We have all been working very hard to make our institution a more diverse and inclusive place. Although there is still work to do, there is no doubt that we have improved in many dimensions. I feel like the University has undermined all our efforts. The Marshall MBA program is the first MBA program that has an incoming class with more than 50% women. I was very happy to see that my MBA.PM classes this Fall were more diverse than ever. By coming to a conclusion on this issue without involving the Marshall community is very disturbing. It almost implies that we are all part of a terrible culture that can only be repaired by outside intervention. I find this very insulting and think we deserve an explanation.

I am stunned at the University's abrupt actions to remove Dean Ellis. I certainly have never seen or been aware of any behavior on his part that would justify this decision. I applaud the Council for meeting with President Austin to find out more.

The explanation provided to date for Dean Ellis's requested departure is inadequate. Either a much fuller explanation needs to be provided, or we as faculty are forced to believe that the decision has no merit whatsoever, and that the senior administration currently in place is arbitrary, capricious, incompetent and unqualified to be in office, and must immediately be replaced. There aren't other ways to view the matter.

We have no particular reason so far to trust the current interim president; we have been given many reasons not to, this being the most egregious. The explanation givenâ€”that there has been â€œan accumulationâ€ of grievances with respect to the OED is self-refuting: Dean Ellis just went through an extensive, exhaustive review barely over a year ago, and he was quite enthusiastically endorsed and re-appointed. If there were issues pertaining to his fitness or to the cultural climate in Marshall, surely they would have prevented his re-appointment last year? How can â€œan accumulationâ€ happen in such a short period of time? Dean Ellis has been a champion of women and minorities in the school, and is unfailingly polite and respectful. Apart from a much fuller and more satisfactory explanation of the situation from the senior administration, we have to believe that the current administration is hostile at least to the best interests of the Marshall School, and possibly to the best interests of the University as a whole.

I am shocked and dismayed by the attempt to remove Dean Ellis in this manner. The abrupt process used to reach this decision and its lack of transparency strikes me as highly inappropriate.

In the wake of a series of scandals USC experienced in the last few years, there has been a lot of talk around faculty governance and transparency. USC's decision to remove Dean Ellis, without consulting with the faculty, shows that "faculty governance" and "transparency" are not taken seriously by the leadership. We, as faculty, know our dean better than an Interim President, who has been on the job for a few months, does. He may not be the most politically correct person, but his actions show a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Our full time MBA program achieved 52% women among admitted students this year, Dean Ellis has always had women in his team, we have had many diversity workshops in the last few months, and have made offers to multiple URM candidates. I feel that under his leadership, Marshall has been a diverse, inclusive, and a peaceful school. I am saddened and shocked by his removal. I don't think anyone who works at Marshall will feel safe anymore-- this feels like a witch hunt. How will it affect our carefully built and maintained reputation? What will we tell our students? Both the decision, and the process with which it has been executed, are extremely upsetting.

Dean Ellis is one of the finest human beings and most impressive leaders I have ever had the privilege of knowing. He is one of the most valuable members of the Trojan Family. I would reconsider my employment and support of USC he he were driven out in this opaque and deplorable manner.

I feel the faculty deserve detailed information on the reasons for President Austin's request.

This sudden decision is very disturbing, having been presented to us completely without context. I am mystified and disappointed in USC leadership.

I think very highly of Jim. He is very supportive of faculty. He has done an excellent job with the school.

It's hard to beat everything that Lloyd Grief shared in his letter. That was much more articulate than I could communicate right now but I share his concerns, perceptions and feelings. I am perplexed by the decision and wonder (1) is there more to the story than we have heard thus far, and (2) was there any politics between the Trustees and Dean Ellis (i.e. specifically Caruso) that influenced the decision beyond performance. I also want to say that the process that has happened here is the antithesis of the open, transparent and fair process that has been espoused by the Trustees, Caruso and the Interim President. The timing stinks as if no one in administration recognized that faculty recruiting is happening right now and bound to influence how well we are able to attract and retain tenure track and clinical faculty.

I am concerned about how this whole process had transpired, and appears to be capricious, lack transparency and due process.

First, as the email seems to suggest, that appears to be some violations of code, or other issues, but there is no information. I would expect that some investigation would have been conducted, the results made known publicly and perhaps a period of comment from the faculty, and then the decision of the administration would follow. As it stands now, there is no apparent reason given. This has created problems, as I have had queries from outside the University asking me what the issues.

Secondly, and of more concerned to me, this process, and lack of transparency, seems to be similar the processes in the past Administration. This suggests to me a systematic problem and that needs to be corrected. Thirdly, I don't think an interim President should be making this major decision. I believe if a thorough investigation was conducted, and the results presented to the University, then the new President and Administration could make the final decision.

Although there is good ethnic diversity at Marshall, it falls short in terms of its gender diversity at the faculty level. One department is high in full-time female faculty--but it is entirely non-tenure track. At the tenure track level, the school has a fairly low percentage of female full-time faculty. Faculty leadership has historically thus been low in female leaders, particularly in non-teaching related roles. Like the university itself, there seems to be a low recognition of women in important roles and in fact, at times, seems to be run like an "old boy" system in the selection of faculty for important roles and decision making.

Dr. Austin might benefit the University by making more information available.

To this point [Dec. 4, 2018], there is no plausible justification offered for the step being undertaken by the university. I have read the interim president's email from Dec. 3, 2018.

While I understand personnel matters may make it impossible to detail the justifications for this action, it seems very important that this not create the ambiance of a lynching. As things stand now, that is the appearance of the university's step.

It's hard to say how the Marshall School would fare after the step-down of Dean Ellis. If an institution depends on so much one individual person, it is not a healthy signal. After such a long tenure of Dean Ellis, it is good for the school to refresh its leadership. The process will surely be not easy and have turbulence, as all leadership turnover would be, the school won't sink, but rather it can pursue new opportunities under the new leadership.

I am appalled and dismayed at the news regarding Dean Ellis. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." And yes, I feel as if this is a situation merits comparison to a tragedy.

I have served on the Marshall faculty for well over 30 years. I have witnessed the leadership and behavior of multiple deans. Jim Ellis is an outstanding dean. For 15 years, I facilitated the new faculty orientation for all incoming Marshall faculty. When greeting and 'briefing' the new faculty, Dean Ellis (in stark comparison to many of our former deans who seemed content to instill a culture of fear), outlined his vision for a collective, productive, respectful culture at Marshall. He stressed the importance of diversity and inclusion issues long before it became the 'hot topic' it has become in recent years. A remarkable positive change in morale, productivity, creativity, and inclusion quickly emerged. Dean Ellis brought the faculty into a shared, cohesive mission of research and teaching. Motivation and morale have never been higher.

Those of us who have known Dean Ellis over the decades, see him as a champion and advocate for improving diversity and inclusion at Marshall--and there are results of this advocacy. For example, becoming the first business school in the country to have over 50 percent women in its incoming MBA class.

Dean Ellis, far beyond any previous dean, is always available to faculty and sensitive to their concerns. He brought faculty into the decision-making process and significantly elevated our voice and ability to affect change. Faculty were no longer fearful to bring problems to the dean.

Dean Ellis has given his live-blood to his position as dean, and the faculty was deeply appreciative of his willingness to renew his most recent term.

I am bewildered, dismayed, and profoundly troubled (even frightened) at the recent turn of events. Among many of the questions and concerns I have:

--The utter lack of clarity in terms of the OED is bewildering -- what exactly is at issue? Did the OED inform school leadership on a regular basis about number and type of cases, about how many were baseless cases, how many involved student/staff/faculty, etc. It seems that this essential information was not conveyed; rather, it was 'pulled out' and communicated after the fact, in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable. Had any OED problems been communicated to the dean, he certainly would have taken immediate strategic action to counteract any such OED trends. Dean Ellis is candid, honest, and open with the Marshall faculty. In recent years as he attending departmental faculty meetings, the importance of equity and diversity was stressed.

--How does Marshall compare to other schools in terms of OED trends? Are we an outlier? Or will other deans also be held accountable?

--As I mentioned, with the advent of Dean Ellis' leadership, Marshall faculty were no longer fearful to bring problems to the dean (with some of our other deans, you simply did not, no what the circumstances, approach them with problems and concerns). Could it be because Dean Ellis created this open, transparent atmosphere that more equity and diversity issue were brought into the light?

--This move on the part of the university administration seems to have been made without due process, possibly without cause, and certainly without transparency.

--How does the university leadership "live and breathe" transparency? I am, once again, appalled at the university leadership acting far outside its stated values. It appears as if our interim president is perpetuating this culture of opaqueness.

I cannot help but add that for the first 15 years (and beyond) that I was a professor at Marshall, I was relentlessly sexually harassed, emotionally harassed, and threatened (loss of my job) by a superior I worked with daily. When I went to both the university and the Marshall school to complain, I was summarily dismissed. "His bark is worse than his bite." "He's really a marshmallow inside." (It was another 15 years before this man was fired--by Dean Ellis) Most certainly, this man 'got away' with his abuse because I was part of a marginalized group. Given that I have never recovered from this abuse, the 'implied accusations' made about Dean Ellis are reprehensible. Dean Ellis would have been my advocate, as he is now, as he is for all Marshall faculty, staff, and students.

Unless we can thwart it, this situation will likely cause significant reputational damage to the school (not to mention Dean Ellis), lower morale, and less willingness among faculty to step into leadership roles. I also think an opaque dismissal of our dean will ironically set us back on diversity and equity initiatives, the very issues that 'seem' to be the rationale for his dismissal. A culture of fear will emerge at Marshall--and this will squander the enormous gains made during Dean Ellis' tenure. Research and teaching will suffer, as will the students and staff.

Jim's memo seems to suggest that he was not aware of the issues he is being blamed for, that it was a university OED problem. Why would he be fired for that?

This seeming erratic and authoritarian decision-making from the President's office seems little better than Nikias and deeply erodes my confidence in this institution.

I am EXTREMELY frustrated with how this has been handled. It has made me concerned for our current recruiting efforts and has left a bad taste in my mouth.

I have a hard time understanding why such immediate action was needed and why no information has been given (no prior faculty consultation or even notification; no insight into the reasons behind the decision after it was made). If the "problem" is so severe as to justify the swift action, then why merely ask him to resign, but continue as faculty? If the "problem" doesn't necessitate him leaving USC, then why not give the faculty some advance notice?

I would like to know as much information as possible about the reasons behind the decision and the opinions of the legal counsel and HR experts. To extent the university is unable to provide certain pieces of information, I would like to know why (e.g., How exactly does this being a "personnel matter" limit the information that can be shared? What exactly are the limits?).

The process raises suspicion. One suspicion is that the interim president has a preferred candidate to move into Jim's role, and was looking for a way to get him out. The process also raises worry. One worry is that a process that looks opaque could be applied to any of us. Another worry is that this process/decision causes unnecessary damage to Marshall's brand. I can list ways this action harms Marshall. What do we think any of the interim president's actions improve?

It appears that this decision did not benefit from important sources of information, including faculty, students, and other vital School constituents. It is understandable, but not acceptable, that the interim nature of the University leadership could result in this sort of mistake. It is important that the interim leadership quickly remedy their oversight.

I am shocked and disturbed that such a decision can (again) be made without consulting the faculty. I thought that the 'dictatorship' of presidents was one of the aspects of the culture we were trying to change at USC. I really hope that there will be more explanations of why such a decision has been made.

I am confused that if Dean Ellis did something so grievous as to warrant his dismissal - why wouldn't it be immediately implemented instead of waiting until the end of the year.

As someone who has worked at Marshall for the last four + years, I may not need to know the exact instances that occurred, but I would want to know the boundaries that were broken to result in a dismissal. The lack of information is only going to create a culture of fear and anxiety for all.

Dean Ellis has been transparent, respectful, communicative, knowledgeable, warm, welcoming and inclusive to the Marshall community in my own experience and I have never had any issues or observed any disturbing behavior.

I don't know the Dean personally nor do I vouch for him. It doesn't matter how well he did for the school or how well he will do or who vouches for him, if he is guilty (for example, of sexual harassment). However, the decision to fire him seems to be based on the same "science" that denies climate change. This is in sharp contrast to the thoroughly researched expose on the Keck school by LA times. Surely, we can do better than LA times.

Engendering transparency is possible only by literally being transparent. As long as we are not serving in someone's arbitrary fiefdom, it is reasonable to expect some justification with a modicum of evidence. If the justification for firing is related to academics, then yes, faculty should have a say in attesting to his performance as well. We teach evidence-based decision making at Marshall. Perhaps we should practice it too.

More importantly, what is the lesson learnt here? Were the processes at Marshall at fault - if so how does removing the Dean change that? If the processes at the university level were at fault(as can be seen by the multiple schools living in scandal), how does the buck stop at the school level and not the university level? Or was he unwilling to co-operate with new changes or offer transparency in his operations? If the Dean is personally culpable, it is worth making it public so no other school hires him. The role of the dean is critical to both faculty and students, and if the leadership does not appreciate that (as evidenced here) there is little hope that a suitable successor will be found.

I am sure my esteemed colleagues in organizational behavior will be happy to point out that organizations need robust processes that are independent, to the extent possible, of people precisely to eliminate arbitrary decision making. Perhaps that principle could be enforced here. Otherwise, I would be surprised if the school can find a competent, self-respecting dean for the school in the near future.

We would also appreciate a situation report on the extent of prevailing toxicity in the school, the leaderships efforts to introduce new processes, and the expected period of transition so we can actively pursue self-preservation.

I have received excellent support as a faculty member at Marshall. The administration has bent over backwards to assist me and provide me with resources when I went on maternity leave. The environment and the system in place has been miles ahead of practice at my previous institution and what I have heard about from colleagues at other schools with respect to supporting female faculty. I have also felt that respected and valued by my fellow colleagues. If there are issues with valuing and accommodating diverse people and situations, it is not systematic and it is not pervasive. I have simply not encountered it at Marshall.

I am Emeritus faculty and served the Marshall School for 30 years serving in leadership positions during several deans during this period. I led faculty efforts to provide Dean Ellis with feedback and he always responded with decisive and positive actions. He is by far the "best" dean I have worked with at Marshall and at the other universities where I have taught. He definitely should be retained and rewarded for his efforts for a position that he did not originally seek but who has worked tirelessly to improve since he first arrived as an executive in residence!

Dean Ellis is the foundation of Marshall and USC. I would rather see the president be asked to step down than to see a leader as distinguished as Jim Ellis leave. This is a sad day for USC. Makes me question whether I want to continue to be part of the Trojan family with this level of cowardice taking place behind the scenes. Sickening.

Without evidence presented to the faculty, and no input from the faculty, this smells exactly like the political lynchings the new President and new order was supposed to prevent. How is this any different from what Max would have done.

What happened to the "new transparency"?

Dean Ellis is a relentlessly positive individual. His spirit provides a great deal of the energy behind the Marshall School of Business. I have talked with him personally about issues relating to gender and diversity and am certain having a fair and welcoming environment is of paramount concern to him. He was incredibly proud of Marshall's achievement in gender parity and brought it up as the one of the first topics on his agenda all of the time.

Last night, I left my classroom with three female African-American graduate students and started talking about these events with them. Two of them had heard nothing about the situation. They were visibly shaken by the news and started recounting how amazingly the Dean had treated them in person to person conversations.

In my nearly seven years on faculty, I have never heard a student or a faculty member speak ill of Dean Ellis. I personally believe he would have acted decisively on all items on the ODE docket if he were informed of them, because I know of his commitment to inclusivity.

USC has a lot to learn and is working to rebuild policies and approaches related to gender and diversity at many levels. We at Marshall likely need to improve the methods we have in dealing with problems, as well. I wholeheartedly believe that Dean Ellis can be a key part of these solutions, both at Marshall and campus-wide.

EDWARD P. ROSKI, JR.

December 19, 2018

Mr. Rick Joseph Caruso
Chairman
Board of Trustees
University of Southern California
3670 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, CA 90089

Dear Rick:

I am deeply troubled by your conduct at last week's Board of Trustees meeting. As both a former chairman and a member of the board for nearly 20 years, I must tell you that I have never before witnessed a member of the board behave so unprofessionally and recklessly as you did last Wednesday, let alone a chairman of the board. You abused the trust and authority vested in you by removing a trustee from the meeting for no discernible reason other than their position differed from your own.

Your arbitrary imposition of a one-minute speaking rule on Ming Hsieh—a rule that you pointedly did not apply to any other trustee in the meeting — it unfairly muzzled a dissenting viewpoint and is contrary to both good governance and the principles of free speech and intellectual discourse for which USC stands.

When Ming dared to speak longer than the one minute you so generously allotted to him, you verbally abused him, shouting him down: "You only have one minute! It's a minute and a half! You have to leave!" You then had him escorted from the boardroom and only permitted him to return when discussion of the Jim Ellis matter had ended.

How long did Wanda speak? How long did you speak? Are the two of you "super-trustees" so that you automatically get more time to state your case?

Rick, we don't win arguments here by shouting louder than the next guy. You took advantage of the fact that English is Ming's second language to stifle his ability to make his case, even though he was one of the few members of the Board who had actually gone to the trouble and inconvenience of going to USC to read the Cooley report and

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Mr. Rick Joseph Caruso
December 19, 2018
Page Two

the dean's personnel file. That information was pointedly not provided to board members either in advance of or during the meeting. Even the meager slides you projected on the screen during the meeting were illegible. Yet, after thoroughly shutting down a key opponent's viewpoint and otherwise limiting discussion, you called for a vote. Even though USC's Academic Senate protested the lack of transparency and shared governance in Wanda's decision to terminate Dean Ellis.

I, for one, was incredibly embarrassed by the way you treated a fellow trustee from a different culture and nationality than your own. The USC I know embraces diversity and inclusion; it does not reject and repel it, as you did by bullying Ming and ejecting him from the boardroom. Your purported rationale for your conduct and autocratic behavior—that Ming had hired an attorney—is ludicrous. All of us have attorneys who represent us; are you going to silence the entire board, or just the members who disagree with you or come from a different ethnicity or nationality?

Ming is a wise, extremely smart and capable individual who has made invaluable contributions to this university since joining the Board of Trustees 11 years ago. He is a steadfast, loyal Trojan who only wants the best for USC.

Rick, your behavior shocked the conscience. I have never before seen another member of the board so callously degrade and marginalize a trustee as you did. I found your conduct extremely offensive. Like myself, Stanley Gold (former Chairman of the Board) felt so strongly about your bullying tactics and censorship of a trustee that he insisted that his objection to Ming's forced removal from the meeting be placed on the record. The minutes should reflect this, including the fact that you gave Ming only one minute to speak, threw him out of the meeting and only allowed him to return to register his vote. An accurate record of this meeting must be maintained for both transparency and accountability reasons.


All of this makes me wonder why you felt you could be so disrespectful to Ming and treat him in such a derogatory manner. Was it because of his background and position, his nationality, gender or race?

This is not the way we behave in society today, this is not what the University of Southern California stands for and this is not what the Board of Trustees is all about. I could literally feel the shock waves passing through my fellow trustees as you diminished Ming, first administering a loud, abrasive tongue lashing, then kicking him out of the meeting.

Mr. Rick Joseph Caruso
December 19, 2018
Page Three

Rick, by preemptively silencing a board trustee, a trustee armed with the facts you deliberately chose not to make readily available to the rest of the Board, you ensured that your agenda would dominate the discussion and made the vote a foregone conclusion. Instead of damping the controversy, you stoked it. This is not leadership, this is manipulation. Because you are Chairman of the Board of Trustees, your irresponsible actions have lowered yourself, the Board and the very University we are here to serve. My strong recommendation would be for you to apologize to Ming and the Board of Trustees for your actions.

Sincerely yours,



Edward P. Roski, Jr.

cc: University of Southern California Board of Trustees



USC University of
Southern California

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Michael W. Quick, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Shelly and Ofer Nemirovsky Provost's Chair

MEMORANDUM

To: James Ellis, Dean

From: Michael W. Quick
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: 3 December 2018

Subject: Recent Actions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Quick".

I was deeply disappointed to learn of the email you sent to Marshall's faculty earlier today. With that communication, you misused the Office of the Dean to advance your own personal agenda, and you placed your personal interests over the interests of Marshall and the University. Moreover, your email put faculty in a position where they may feel pressured to show support for you because of your current role, and out of fear of retaliation. That showed an alarming lack of judgment.

I realize you disagree with President Austin's decision. However, you cannot abuse your role to try to change her mind. If you do that again, you will be subject to further action.

Cc: Michael Blanton